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REMARKS

Claims 2 to 12, 32 and 33 are pending. Claims 6 and 7 are cancelled. No claims are allowed.

1. Claims 2 to 5 and 8 to 12 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 USC 102(a) as obvious over Cowdery et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,445,511) (alone or in view of Szyszkowski (U.S. Patent No. 5,282,841)).

As discussed in the amendment filed November 3, 2005, Cowdery et al. relates to a pacemaker electrode connector assembly that "is not molded around metal termination blocks. Instead, the plastic connector body is molded separately (although not necessarily as a single integral element)." At column 7, lines 36 to 48, Cowdery et al. describes that the "metal termination blocks are attached to the lead-throughs and only then are the plastic parts of the connector body put into place. The four termination blocks are assembled onto the pulse generator case and are supported in space on their respective connecting wires. The plastic connector body parts are then slid over and onto the preassembled components, with all voids being filled or coated with standard medical-grade sealant/adhesive." Two embodiments of Cowdery et al.'s invention are illustrated; the first is in Figs. 6 and 7A-7E, the second in Figs. 8 - 9E.

In contrast, independent claim 2 has been amended to call for the body being of a polymeric construction molded as a

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single piece. Support for this is found in the specification beginning at page 14, line 14 with respect to Figs. 11 and 12. There, a book mold is described for molding any one of the described header assemblies 10, 150 and 200. The book mold comprises first and second mold portions 252 and 254 forming a cavity having the shape of the header. That way, the polymeric body is molded as a single, monolithic piece to support and completely encase the first and second terminals except for the claimed passageways and bores leading thereto. Admittedly, Cowdery et al.'s connector assembly does not function in this manner.

Szyszkowski relates to a header for an implantable stimulation device. The header comprises a set of ribbon conductors 14 that connect between connector blocks 30 and terminal connectors 28 upstanding from feedthrough terminals 26. This assembly is loaded into a fixture and then encased in a polymeric material during a molding process. The conductors 14 are an intermediate structure electrically bridging between the feedthrough terminals 26 and the connector blocks 30.

In that respect, independent claim 2 has been further amended to set forth that the first and third passageways leading into the polymeric body are in communication with the second and fourth passageways, respectively. The second and fourth passageways communicate with apertures in the first and second terminal blocks and provide for receiving a threaded member to help secure the lead of a conductor therein. However, the claimed first and third passageways are the ones

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that each "provide for receiving a feedthrough wire contacting the respective first and second terminals". As described at page 12, lines 9 to 17, a laser beam is then aimed through the third and fourth passageways 187 and 188 to weld the feedthrough wires to the terminal blocks. This means that not only does the applicants' claimed header comprise a molded, single piece polymeric body, but its passageway network eliminates the need for an intermediate conductor bridging between the terminal connectors of the feedthrough terminals and the connector blocks. Instead, the feedthrough wires are directly weld connected to the terminals.

Thus, amended independent claim 2 is believed to be patentable over the cited prior art patents. Claims 3, 4, 8 to 12, 32 and 33 are allowable as hinging from a patentable base claim. Claims 6 and 7 are cancelled.

Reconsideration of this rejection is requested.

2. Claims 2 to 12, 32 and 33 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wiklund et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,919,215) or Szyszkowski in view of Cowdery. Wiklund et al. relates to a pre-formed header module 12 that is connected to a hermetically sealed enclosure 14. The header module 12 includes an electrode channel 28 extending transversely there through and located generally between suture bores 22 and 24. The electrode channel 28 receives an electrode plate 70 inserted therein from one side opening so that an exposed electrode surface appears in a window on the other side of the header module housing 20. A pin receiving channel 58 is

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formed extending upward from a module attachment surface 48 to intersect with the transverse electrode channel 28. Upon assembly of the header module with the hermetically sealed enclosure 14, the feedthrough pin 40 is directed through the pin receiving channel 58 and deflected at an angle that intersects the interior surface of the electrode plate 70. This is shown in Fig. 8 of Wiklund et al. Then, the terminus of the feedthrough pin 40 is welded to the interior surface of the electrode plate 70 through the electrode channel 28. Finally, the electrode channel 28 is back filled with a spacer and adhesive to seal off connection between the distal end of the feedthrough pin 40 and the electrode plate 70.

In that respect, the electrode plate 70 is not mold encased in the header. Instead, it is the electrode plate's connection to the distal end of the feedthrough pin 40 that keeps it housed therein. Without this connection, the electrode plate 70 will fall or slide out of the electrode channel 28.

In contrast, independent claim 2 has been amended to set forth that the body of polymeric material is "molded as a single piece to support the first and second terminals in a partially encased relationship so that the first and second terminals are prevented from moving by the polymeric material". This is apparent from the applicants' specification beginning on page 14, line 14 where the book mold shown in Figs. 11 and 12 is described. Except for the passageways through which the welds between the feedthrough wires and the terminal blocks are made and the apertures which

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receive set screws for securing the electrical connection between the lead of a co-axial conductor and the terminal blocks (coinciding to parts 258 and 260 in the mold), the pin 266 having the shape of the lead of a co-axial conductor, and the inserts 268, 270 coinciding with passageways 182, 184 through which feedthrough wires 172, 174 are received, the terminal blocks 262 and 264 are completely encased in the polymeric material. Being encased in the polymeric material except for the claimed selectively shaped passageways prevents the terminal blocks from moving out of the body. This is believed to overcome Wiklund et al. as an anticipatory or obviousness reference. The Szyszkowski and Cowdery et al. patents have already been discussed with respect to amended independent claim 2 in section 1 above, and are not believed to be sufficient to render it unpatentable.

Thus, the header assembly set forth in amended independent claim 2 is neither anticipated by, nor obvious in light of either of Wiklund et al. and Szyszkowski. The secondary reference of Cowdery et al. does not fill in the missing disclosure. Claims 3, 4, 8 to 12, 32 and 33 are patentable as hinging from an allowable base claim.

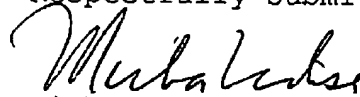
Reconsideration of this rejection is requested.

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It is believed that claims 2 to 4, 8 to 12, 32 and 33 are now in condition for allowance. Notice of Allowance is requested.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael F. Scalise

Reg. No. 34,920

Greatbatch, Inc.  
10,000 Wehrle Drive  
Clarence, New York 14031  
(716) 759-5810  
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